

Have Cart, Will Travel

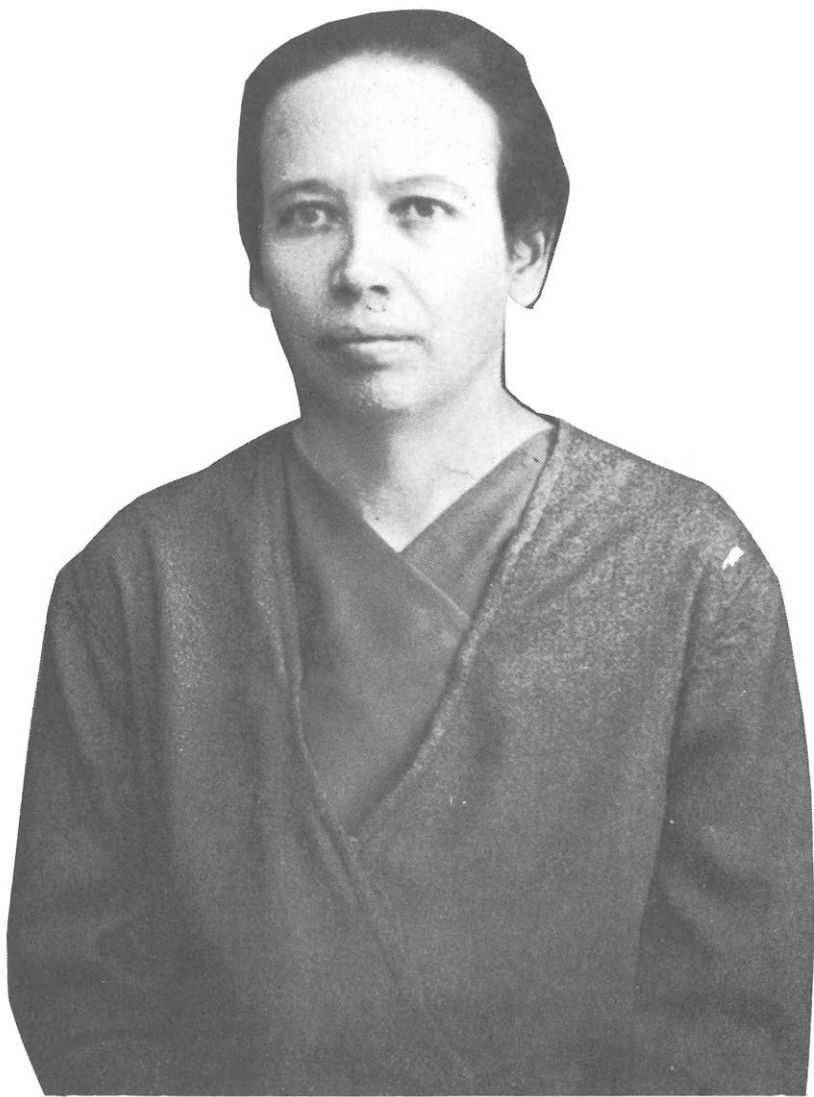
Tossed like flotsam on an unruly sea, Paulina Foote survived the dangers of communist guerrilla warfare and Japanese aggression in China.

Katie Funk Wiebe

Have Cart, Will Travel

Others in Trailblazer Series

P. M. Friesen
Witness Extraordinary
Stalwart for the Truth



Paulina Foote as a young missionary, ready to begin her assignment.

Have Cart, Will Travel

The life story of Paulina Foote, adapted from her book,
God's Hand Over My Nineteen Years in China

by
Katie Funk Wiebe

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SERIES FOREWORD

An institution is but the lengthened shadow of a person, commented Emerson Sagely. And the history of the church is no exception. Great men and women, following the vision of the God who called, have helped to shape the church. Our Mennonite Brethren church has also been the recipient of God's bounty in men and women who followed the beat of another drummer, and it is with gratitude to them and to the Spirit who empowered them that the Board of Christian Literature publishes the Trailblazer Series, brief biographies of those who struck out, sometimes in new but always in difficult paths. It is particularly significant that we begin this series as we commemorate one hundred years of opportunity in the New World. It is also not without significance that we begin the series, not only with the biography of a missionary (for the Mennonite Brethren church was born in mission), but with the biography of a woman missionary. We trust her example will teach us to blaze new trails.

Board of Christian Literature

General Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church

FOREWORD

Mennonite missionary activity in China began with the work of H. C. Bartel, who in 1901 founded the independent China Mennonite Mission Society, based in Shantung province, with about a dozen of his workers coming from Mennonite Brethren congregations.

Mennonite Brethren began their own field farther south in Fukien Province in 1911 under F. J. Wiens, and it was here that Paulina Foote had her first assignment. Later, another field was begun in Western China, and Miss Foote worked here as well.

Have Cart, Will Travel is not merely a flippant title; it is a description of the determination of a remarkable woman whose commitment to her God involved her in church-planting work in three widely differing areas of China (Fukien, Shantung and Kansu-Shensi provinces), in perilous journeyings during guerrilla and army warfare, and in loneliness that was lessened only by the conviction that God had called her.

She was a remarkable pioneer, a real trailblazer in mission.

PROLOGUE

A middle-aged woman with greying hair leaned against the railing of the army transport as it moved slowly toward the San Francisco dock. Her eyes searched the crowd gathered on the landing, eager to find a familiar face, but the distance between them and the boat was too great for her weakened eyesight.

As she waited for the boat to dock, unconsciously she became aware of the sun setting in the West, reflecting its transient beauty in the San Francisco Bay as the boat passed beneath the Golden Gate Bridge. Without actually thinking about it, she saw the shoreline, edged with large and small buildings interspersed with green trees.

Unmindful of her strange appearance, she continued to look toward the shore. Around her head was wound an odd orange and brown scarf of unknown vintage, turban-like. An old green overcoat trimmed with grey fur kept a nondescript dress nearly out of sight. Her feet were covered with white canvas shoes edged with brown leather.

Relief clothes. But God had supplied them for her journey homeward, so she accepted them without complaint. They were all she had been able to locate before she left China for her native America.

Her eyes tried anew to focus on the distant crowd. How good it was to be home again. Home, to see her parents after an absence of over twelve years . . . both were now over eighty. Home, to meet her friends . . . Sophia Richert? Perhaps others?

As she continued to examine the distant crowd, she realized she was tired . . . well, at least a little weary . . . yet she longed to be home to tell the people in the churches that God had been good to her: He had never failed her during her nineteen years in China, so much of which had been spent in flight from the Japanese army.

There was a tinge of humor to her memory as it rambled back over the number of times she had packed together her

cot with its bedding and her personal belongings to make a hasty exit. Travel had been her experience in China. Would she return to China . . . ever?

The boat slowed still more as it approached the dock . . . there was Sophia's brother John . . . and Sophia herself . . . and Mr. and Mrs. Henry Heier . . .

The year was 1945. Japan had declared a truce with the United States following the dropping of the atom bomb. Paulina Foote, missionary to China, was coming home.

As the sun was setting, so also behind her the opportunity to preach the Gospel in China was coming to a close. Her work there was finished, a work that she had begun more than twenty-five years earlier, a work which was born long before that in the heart of a little girl of eight.



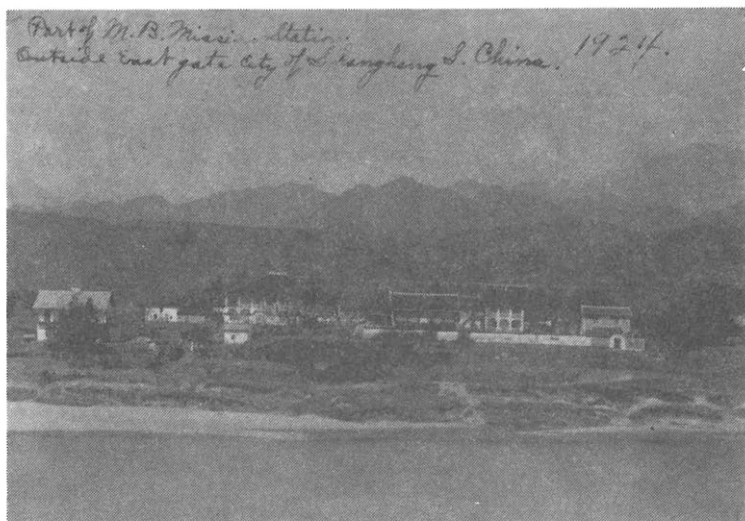
Map:

1. South China (Fukien Province)
2. North China (Shantung Province)
3. West China (Free China) Provinces:
Honan Szechuan Kan-su Shensi
4. Rivers:
Yellow
Yangtze
Japan

5. Cities:
 1. Peiping
 2. Tsaohsien
 3. Shanghai
 4. Shanghang
 5. Engteng
 6. Swatow
 7. Canton
 8. Chungking
 9. Shuanshipu
 10. Ningling
 11. Hsien Kaocheng
 12. Pei Shui Kai
 13. Kuang Yuan



Graduation at Shanghang Bible School in 1926.



Part of the Mennonite Brethren Mission Station outside the east gate of the city of Shanghang, South China, about 1924.

1

RELUCTANT TEACHER

On November 13, 1891, a baby girl was born to Henry and Eva Block Foote, immigrant farmers in the Hillsboro, Kansas, area.

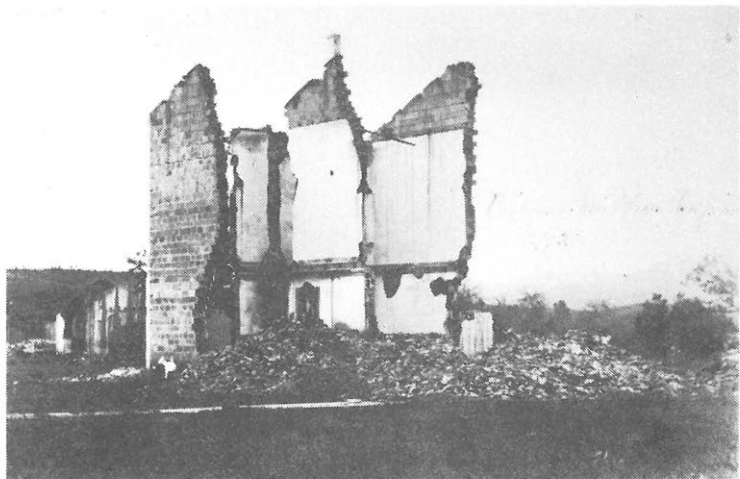
I arrived four days after the death of my oldest sister, at a time when Father and Mother were in deep grief. Yet they found comfort and strength in the Word of God.

Three sisters and two brothers were born into the family after me. One sister died in infancy. My parents were poor; they worked hard for a meagre living. Besides working his farm, Father quarried stone. Some days he was kept so busy at the quarry he didn't have enough time to come home for dinner. But he always took time to read the papers—to stay in touch with the world.

How well I remember one Saturday evening when he read a report to the family of how the Turks persecuted the Armenian Christians. The missionary writing the account had witnessed the massacre; he described how the hard-hearted soldiers speared the babies with their bayonets, then burned them alive.

Although I was only eight at the time, I'll never forget the grief I felt for those babies and their mothers. The next day at church I told my playmates that when I grew up I would tell those Turks about Jesus. Surely if they knew about Him, they would not be so cruel. But I put off making Jesus my own Saviour for a long time.

Because I was the oldest child in the family, my job was to help Father with his work outside on the farm. One day, when I was about nine or ten years old, he wanted to take two loads of wheat to the neighboring town about nine



The buildings of the mission station lie in ruins, but the church
of Jesus Christ lives.

miles away. He drove one team of horses and I the other. By the time we arrived in town, unloaded the wheat and started home, night had fallen, Because we did not drive to that town often, I was not familiar with the road, especially in the dark. The trip was long and wearisome for a young child, so I fell asleep as the horse jogged along.

Suddenly I woke with a start. A wall of darkness shrouded me on all sides. Where was Father's wagon? At the next crossroads I did not know if I should turn or go straight. I was lost behind him and Father didn't know it; his wagon rattled so loudly he could not hear mine. I decided to go straight on and I hurried the horses, trying to peer through the darkening night for a sight of him.

Finally up ahead I could hear his wagon, faintly at first, then louder. Now the fear was gone, but sleep had also vanished until I was safe in bed at home. **Watch and stay close to Father** was a lesson I learned from this experience; I was to recall it often later on in China.

Despite our poverty and hard work, we were a happy family. Yet sorrow, at some time, finds its way into every home. As an eagle pounces upon its prey, so grief came to our home.

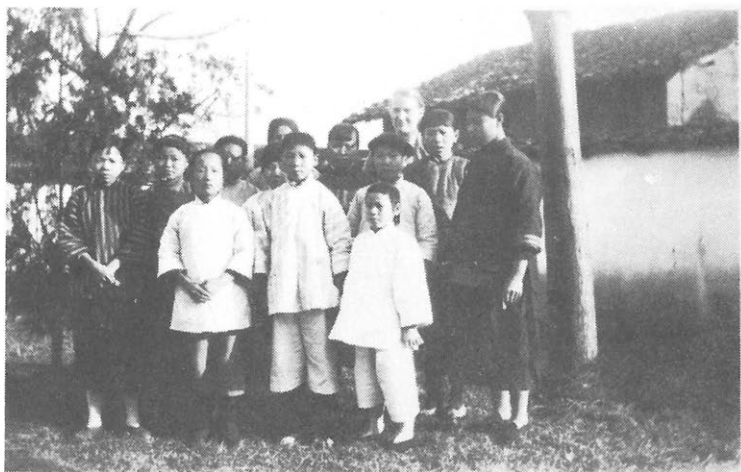
One sunny morning in August as I was rocking my baby brother, Mother and Father were preparing to leave for town in a spring wagon drawn by white broncos. Mother kissed each of us children good-by as she usually did. We didn't know then it was the last kiss we would receive from her.

On the way to town, without warning, the neck yoke between the horses broke, causing the tongue of the wagon to plow into the uphill road studded with jutting stones. The frightened horses rushed forward. Father, fearing the tongue would get caught under a big rock and hurl the wagon into the air, cautioned Mother to jump off the back of the wagon, which she did. Father soon brought the team to a stop by guiding them into a roadside hedge. He rushed back to Mother to find her gasping her last breath. The fall

had broken her neck. Father came home without Mother; she was brought to us lifeless a little later. After the funeral the house, always so full of her gentle talk and activity, seemed so empty and desolate. I still remember wandering through all the rooms in the farmhouse. I had to find Mother; but she was not there. Now I, the oldest daughter, was expected to take her place.

Often I was lonesome for my dear mother in heaven. Though I wanted to join her some day, I kept putting off accepting Christ as Saviour. I faced a big barrier; not only did I want to enjoy life, but I feared that if I became a follower of Christ's, He would ask me to leave all and become a missionary to a foreign field. More than that, when I saw Christians who did not remain faithful to Him, I feared that I too might turn away from Him. So I kept postponing becoming a Christian.

While attending school I studied church history. The deaths of the early Christian martyrs impressed me, for when I saw how they remained faithful to Christ and even sang songs of praises as they faced death, I became convinced this was not done in their own strength. Surely



A group of Chinese Christians

the Lord gave them the grace and strength they needed at such moments. If He did that much for them, He would also keep me if I would accept Him as Saviour. At the age of eighteen I finally responded to the altar call at revival meetings in church. In 1909 I was baptized and became a member of the Mennonite Brethren Church at Corn, Oklahoma.

The following year at the Tabor Academy in Hillsboro, Kansas, I was able to take the preparatory course for students who, like me, had not finished grade school. After two years of studies, I taught grade school to finance my further education. Then back to Tabor for another two years. During my absence from Hillsboro, a Mission Band had been organized. This consisted mainly of members who felt a definite calling from God to go into home or foreign mission work. The Mission Band received me warmly into its fellowship even though I had not yet decided where God wanted me to serve. I was convinced He wanted me in some mission work, but I wasn't convinced I should go to



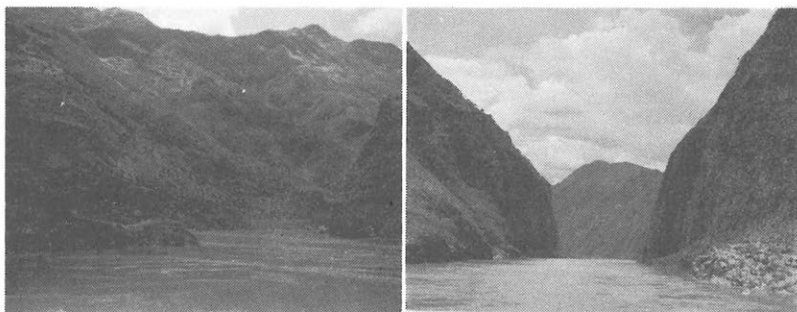
A closer view of the girls' school drillground and ladies' home at the Mennonite Brethren Mission station in Shanghang before its destruction by the Red Army.

another country, away from family and friends.

During the period I was struggling with the problem of what to do with my life, I went to a service one Sunday at which the late D. E. Harder was the guest speaker. His text was Luke 16:19-31, the story of the rich old man and the poor beggar Lazarus. When he read Abraham's words to the man in torment, "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them," my mind was finally at ease. Why should I stay in the homeland where everyone had the opportunity to hear or read the Gospel if they wanted to? My duty was to go where people did not know about Jesus Christ, I heard nothing more of the sermon, so loudly had the Spirit of the Lord spoken to me through these words.

Even after such clear direction, however, several years elapsed before the way opened for me to go to the mission field. In a missions class, we had studied how God calls His servants into His service through His Word, His Spirit, and through man—that is, the church or a mission society. He had called me through His Word and His Spirit, now I awaited His call through man. Would it come? I tried to be patient.

After graduation from the high school course at Tabor, I taught four more years in rural schools. My sense of calling to become an overseas missionary remained strong, even though it was frequently tested by all kinds of circum-



Some of the scenic views in China which Paulina Foote enjoyed during her travels. The exact site is unknown.

stances. Father had remarried shortly after the death of my mother; now our new mother was sick with cancer. Surely it was my duty to take care of her and keep house for a family of eight. But God provided another answer. My sister Eva, who had been staying with an uncle and aunt since our first mother's death, offered to take care of her.

While I was at Tabor College for my first two years of college work, Missionary Sarah Baltzer died on her return trip from China. One of her fellow missionaries asked me, "Will you take Sarah's place?" The question came so unexpectedly, I had no answer.

The next fall, the married missionaries of the Mennonite Brethren Mission in South China asked the Board of Foreign Missions to send out a teacher to instruct their children. I was suggested as one of two possible candidates. This proposal threw me into a quandary. The children of missionaries knew the Gospel perhaps better than the average child in the whole denomination. Why should I go to China to teach them?

I turned to the book of Daniel for wisdom and strength to make the difficult decision. I saw how God had undertaken for Daniel and had given him the ability and courage to make the right choices.

I prayed earnestly to the Lord: "In your mercy give me your signature in an unmistakable way so that when I go to China I can rely upon your help in all things. I must know that I am doing your will, and that you will undertake for me so my faith does not fail."

He answered my prayer by speaking to me through Deuteronomy 1:21; "Behold the Lord thy God hath set the land before thee: Fear not, neither be thou discouraged." I was ready to teach missionary children.

Only later did I recognize that this would be God's way of getting me to the foreign mission field. While I was teaching American children, I could prepare myself to work among the Chinese. I was ready. It was not difficult now to become the first teacher to be sent out to teach the children of missionaries.

In August of 1922 the Mennonite Brethren Church at Bessie, Oklahoma, erected a tent for the ordination service and farewell festivities before my departure for China. The thought of being ordained as a missionary perplexed me. Women in our conference did not preach. Why should I be ordained if I could not proclaim the Gospel to those who had not heard it? Women were permitted to tell the Gospel to women and children, not to men. What if men would come to my women's and children's meetings? What would I do then? Stop preaching?

How surprised I was when Elder Johann Foth of the Ebenfeld congregation near Hillsboro proved from Scripture that women should preach. He used the story of Mary Magdalene, the first of Christ's followers to come to the grave on the resurrection morning. She was the first to tell the greatest story of all stories—that Christ had risen from the dead. She was the first to be commanded by Christ Himself to carry this good news to the disciples, to the men and to Peter who had failed Him. My problem about the ordination was solved, and my later experience proved that this was the Lord's working, for the women in China, in many instances, are the slaves of their husbands and mothers-in-law. It was important that the men hear our messages, for many of the women were dull and understood very little of the Gospel, which came as a new idea to them. The men often explained to their wives what they had heard. Furthermore, when the men saw that our Jesus doctrine was a good one, they did not object if their women became followers of the New Way.

At the time of my departure from San Francisco, a large crowd of friends from the Reedley, Dinuba, and Lodi, California, churches accompanied the F. J. Wiens family, who were returning to China after their furlough, and myself to the dock. The evening before our sailing we had gathered for a farewell prayer meeting. As the ship left the pier, our friends ashore threw rolls of paper streamers to the passengers. I caught one held by a friend from Reedley.

Long after those held by the others had torn as the ship sailed away from the dock, mine continued intact. Was this a sign that my absence from American soil would be longer than that of my co-passengers? I wondered.

After a few stops—one in Honolulu with its beautiful vegetation, another at Yokohama Harbor in Japan, the land of the rising sun—we docked briefly in Shanghai, where I put my feet on Chinese soil for the first time. Finally we disembarked at Hong Kong. From here we travelled by coastal liner to Swatow in South China, where we made preparation for our trip upriver to Shanghang, my new home in China. The year was 1922, the month, December. I would begin the New Year doing the work to which God had called me several years ago.

2

EARLY COMMUNIST UNREST

At the coastal city of Swatow, Mrs. Wiens and the children took the train immediately to Chaohsien to make preparations for the trip upriver by small houseboat to Shanghang, 200 miles inland, while Mr. Wiens and I stayed until our baggage was through customs and on the train. By the time we also arrived in Chaohsien, it was late in the afternoon. One of the Chinese church members met us there and engaged two men with a sedan chair to carry me to the hotel where Mrs. Wiens and the children were staying. In the meantime, still that evening, Mr. Wiens had the baggage loaded onto the boat that would take us up the river and inland to my new home.

My chairbearers could not understand English and I could not understand Chinese; nor had I been told how far they should carry me. Uneasily I swayed in the chair fastened to two bamboo poles, the ends of which rested on the shoulders of two ragged Chinese. They carried me on narrow paths through fields, climbed over tumbledown city walls, and continued through narrow streets with mud-brick houses on both sides. Uneasily I noticed that it was getting dark and I could not yet see anything that looked like a hotel.

Strange thoughts entered my head. What if these men were kidnappers? Where were they taking me? Our journey seemed endless. On and on they walked. I gripped the edges of my chair wondering what to do as I peered into the gathering darkness for the appearance of buildings that looked assuring. The streets remained narrow but the buildings began to have wooden fronts, though without

paint and very dingy looking.

Finally, the men stopped abruptly at a drab building with an open door and turned to me, demanding their money. Was this a hotel? Was this where we were to stay? After I had called loudly for Mrs. Wiens for some time, she rushed downstairs followed by one of her children. My near-panic subsided. My fears had been unfounded. The men were not kidnappers after all. Mrs. Wiens helped me pay the men who had carried me the long distance and welcomed me to our overnight lodging.

That night I experienced my first Chinese bed, which prompted me long thereafter to take my own cot with me whenever I traveled in China. The bed no springs and no mattress—only boards spread with a grass mat and a thin comforter. There was another comforter to cover me. I shivered all night long because of the cold. The bed had no soft spot, so I turned and twisted to find comfort. When morning came I was glad to rest on my feet rather than on my back in a Chinese bed.

Customarily, houseboats are propelled by boatmen who push the boat through the water with long poles or pull it along the shore with bamboo cables. Our houseboat was pulled by a steam launch.

After a short boat trip up the river in a houseboat, we arrived at our destination at Shanghang, where the native church, the students of the two mission schools, and others had prepared a welcome service for the F. J. Wiens family and me. Here I was quickly and unceremoniously initiated into the stark realities of life and death in this new country.

While Tina Kornelsen, one of the missionaries, was getting her students ready to march to church a mile away for the welcoming service, some Chinese women brought in a day-old baby, stiff with cold, with hardly anything covering it. The women mumbled that they thought it was dying. They placed the infant on the cement floor behind Miss Kornelsen's heater while I ran upstairs to get part of an old blanket and a pillow from my bed. The women called Mrs. Wiens, who gave the tiny boy a bath to warm him.

Surprisingly, he survived this cold ordeal and grew up to be a fine young man.

At the church firecrackers exploded, welcoming us and announcing that an important event was taking place there. The crowds gathered. Preachers, evangelists, deacons, missionaries, teachers and students made speech after speech of welcome of which I could not understand one syllable, with the exception of one student who spoke in English. Would I be able to learn this strange language with its tonal variations? The welcoming service closed with prayer, after which the whole congregation lined up in front of the church building to take a picture. I could barely believe this day had come. At last, after so many years, I was in China.

Soon after this initial excitement, my work of teaching in the American school in China began with seven students in one of the rooms of a missionary's residence. Because both grade and high school students were taught, I was kept extremely busy. Little time was left to study the difficult Chinese language, much to my disappointment.

Our school work was not all routine, for now and then we took a day off to visit the beautiful hills surrounding Shanghai. In summer the missionary families usually went to some nearby mountain for a short vacation to escape the heat of the valley. Part of my first summer in China was spent with some missionary families on a mountain near an idol temple.

We enjoyed the cool air and the beautiful scenery. Below us the mountainside was covered with terraced rice fields. Streams with clear water wriggled their way down to the valleys. Each sunset painted the clouds among the mountains with beautiful hues, which changed as the sun slipped behind the peaks. Pine trees, locust, catalpa and camphor grew everywhere. Tall bamboo stalks, bending over like ferns, covered the mountainsides. As the shadows grew longer in the valleys, the various shades of green of the trees and plants took on a deeper coloration, while at the

higher elevations the lighter shades clung to the tops of the tall trees until the setting sun had disappeared.

During this time I got my first opportunity to do a little work among the Chinese children. My pupils and I started a Sunday school in part of the city. As we walked along the street, we showed a used Sunday school card to the ragged and dirty children playing outside. We told them that if they would follow us to a certain building, we would tell them the story of the picture on the card. Some followed us. After several weeks of invitation we had as many as sixty children meeting with us. Because I could not speak Chinese, my American students taught the lessons and served as my interpreters. Very soon we saw an outward change in these street children. The first few Sundays they came as dirty as we had found them. After attending for some time, they washed their faces, combed their hair and cleaned up their clothing.

Before long the Lord entrusted me with another responsibility which I had not expected. At this time little Chinese girls were often sold as slaves. One such child was kept by a soldier and the woman who was living with him. Although only three or four, she was forced to be ready to run errands for them at all times, including the late evening. Worn out, the tired child often fell asleep at night, but the woman would pinch her sharply to awaken her to rub her back for her. Our native Christians saw that the child was suffering under this inhumane treatment, so they asked the missionaries if we would help. Tina Kornelsen, one of the missionaries, paid about \$30 in Chinese currency for the right to adopt the little girl, whom she named Luella.

Ill health forced Miss Kornelsen to take an early furlough, so she asked me to take care of the child until she returned to China. If she did not come back, the child was mine. When she did return about eight years later, she decided that it would be better for the child to remain with me. From this little girl I began to learn more of the Chinese language as we tried to speak with each other.

During the years 1925 to 1927 many changes were taking place in China as the communists struggled to gain party leadership and the Nationalist Party leader, General Chiang Kai Shek, attempted to suppress their uprising. This continual unrest made the work in the boys school very strenuous, straining the health of Mrs. B. F. Wiens, who had taken over this task after the death of her husband in 1922. To preserve her health and to take better care of her family, she finally left for the homeland. The enrollment in the missionary school where I was teaching continued to decrease as other missionary families left because of the political upheaval and revolutionary conditions. Because someone was needed to take over the Chinese girls' school in Shanghang as supervisor when its director also left, I was considered for this position.

However, political conditions continued to deteriorate rapidly, making the work difficult, and our stay in China indefinite. Communism was infiltrating the boys' school so extensively we decided to close it. Before long we received a telegram from the American Consul asking us to leave the interior because of communist agitation against Americans. When we went into the city, the boys in the streets screamed, "Down with the foreign devils. Strike down the capitalists and imperialists." Once we were showered with sticks and stones, but fortunately no one was hurt.

As I watched the others packing, getting ready to go, the thought of leaving China disturbed me. Hadn't the Lord called me to take the Gospel to those who did not know it? He had led me to China. How could it be His will for me to leave just when the door was opening for me to work among the Chinese? The issue remained muddy in my mind. We missionaries decided to have a day of fasting and prayer when each person would decide for himself what he should do.

At this meeting the dangers that might confront us if we should decide to stay in China were presented to us very clearly. In my mind Reason shouted, "Leave, go where it is safe." but Faith whispered, "Stay where God has called

you." I left the meeting singing in my heart. "It's just like Jesus to roll the clouds away" even though my eyes did not see the clouds rolling as yet. I was convinced I should stay. Inwardly I was comforted by a letter from Elder H. H. Flaming of Corn, Oklahoma, who had sent me the verses Jeremiah 15:20-21 to encourage me: "And I will make thee unto this people a fenced brazen wall: and they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee: for I am with thee to save thee and deliver thee, saith the Lord. And I will deliver thee out of the hand of the wicked, and I will redeem thee out of the hand of the terrible." My work in China was not yet finished.

In preparation for evacuation, the responsibilities of the missionaries were handed over to a council of Chinese brethren who were somewhat taken aback at this sudden burden of responsibility, and at first seemed frightened to take over the church leadership. After all the missionaries, except Adelgunda Priebe, Sophia Richert and I, had packed most of their belongings, and Mr. F. J. Wiens had turned their household goods over to the Chinese church, we three women decided to go as far as the coastal city of Swatow, Kwangtung, for temporary refuge until conditions calmed down again at Shanghang.

At the coast we continued the school work with the missionary children until the students were ready for promotion to the next grade. While there, news reached us from the mission station at Shanghang that the compound in the east suburb had been looted, but that the buildings had not been destroyed. This incident and the continuing unfavorable rumors about conditions in the interior confirmed Mr. F. J. Wiens' conviction that he and his family should return to the homeland. He advised all missionaries to leave China, including the single missionaries. The schools for English-speaking children in Shanghai had temporarily closed, although not all Baptist and Presbyterian missionaries had left Swatow. Here and there missionaries of other denominations were leaving or getting ready

to leave.

When we listened to the news and the rumors, we knew it was dangerous to go back to our mission compound. The battle in my heart became so severe my appetite failed me. All day long the struggle raged within me. I went to bed at night tired and exhausted. Though I slept some, sleep did not give me any rest. I got up in the morning more tired than when I had retired the night before. We three single missionaries prayed much and lived on the Word of God more than on the food on the table.

One day I took my Bible and went into the mountains alone. Here I found a rock as large as a small house behind which I hid as I poured out my troubles to the Lord. I told Him that if I had misunderstood Him during these eleven years since I thought He had given me the command to bring the Gospel to those who had not heard it, He should reveal this to me, and I would be ready to leave. If He wanted me to stay on, He should strengthen my faith through His Word and the Spirit.

In answer He gave me Luke 14:26, "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life, he cannot be my disciple." In another Gospel the word for "hate" is "leave." So far I had left father, mother, prospects of married life, brothers and sisters, but I had not yet given my life. If I stayed in China and went inland again, it might mean laying down my life. Was I ready for that? I reread that part of the Scripture again and noted particularly, "If any man come to me and hate not . . . his own life, he cannot be my disciple." If I was not willing to give up my own life, I could not be His disciple. What would America mean to me without Him? What could I do without the privilege of being His disciple? My decision was made. I would stay in China.

The Wiens family, together with some of the other missionaries and their families, left for the United States in July of 1927. We three women remained behind to return to

Shanghang.

As their boat left for the homeland, I felt suddenly free. The Lord had released me of the American school, for now I had no students. He had been the strength, wisdom and joy I needed for that work. Now I was at liberty to fulfill His will for me as I had understood it so long before.

3

CAUGHT IN THE CROSSFIRE

The Mennonite Brethren mission field in South China was situated in the Han and Mei River basins in the southwest corner of Fukien Province. Between the mountains nestled fertile valleys where the Hakka people lived. Strictly speaking, the area contained only 650 square miles, but actually it was much larger because some of the Hakkas to the North had spread over the county line.

Before long we received word at Swatow from Shanghang that conditions had improved. Four men who had led the looting of our mission compound had been executed. Conditions seemed safe, so we three women made the return trip, not knowing in what state we would find the compound.

When I took over the girls' school in Shanghang just before we evacuated to the coast, part of my personal belongings had been moved into a missionary residence. Those things were undamaged, but nearly everything else had disappeared. The American school library and most of my books were gone, as well as my sewing machine, some tables and other furniture.

The Chinese teachers at the girls' school had carried on with the work as well as they could during my absence, so on my return we held graduation exercises. Vacation period was near and we needed time to evaluate the situation and to plan.

When I and the other two missionaries who were left looked at the task that had been done by six or seven missionaries before the fighting broke out and which we,

with the help of a few native workers should now be doing, the responsibility seemed too great. When we looked at ourselves, we could hardly understand why the Lord had kept us in China. Adelgunda Priebe had been in China only about six months and still did not know the language. My knowledge of the language was also meagre because I had been teaching in the American school. Sophia Richert, who had been in China longer than either of us, could speak quite fluently.

We decided that instead of all three staying at the same station, we would split up. Miss Richert would go to the Engteng station, some forty miles upstream, and Miss Priebe would accompany her to help in the clinic and continue her language study. That left me alone in Shanghang, but with stronger native help than at Engteng.

My first task was to reopen the fall term of the Shanghang Girls' School, but again a number of problems confronted us. Teachers had to be selected and hired. At this time when communistic propaganda had influenced many people to be prejudiced against foreign missionaries and the Gospel, we had to be careful to avoid hiring teachers who would work against us. The same held true for students, for some of them were active communists. However, the school opened in August with a special program at which one of the guests was the commander-in-chief of the soldiers from the Nationalist army then occupying Shanghang.

After only a few weeks of school, rumors filtered through the city that a communist army was on its way to the coast traveling through Shanghang. Fear, hope, anxiety, excitement filled the air.

"The poor will be liberated from hardship . . ."

"All rich will be liquidated . . ."

"All workers for the National Government will be killed . . ."

"All teachers in schools are enemies of the communists and must be put away . . ."

"All who believe in some kind of religion, whether Christian or idol worship, will be persecuted . . ."

"Everyone over forty years of age will be killed . . ."

Rumors were more abundant than leaves in a forest.

As the communist army steadily approached the city, we were told they would move into the homes of the people and help themselves to the civilians' food and other provisions. The Nationalist Chinese commander and his troops deserted the city to hide in the neighboring villages. The principal of our school also left.

Thus soon after I had made the decision to stay in China, I was being tested again. What should I do? Should I flee? Where should I flee to? Where would I find a safe place? Would my presence endanger my native helpers? I prayed much concerning this. One morning, just as I was awakening, the words spoken to Paul on his way to Rome came clearly to mind: "Fear not . . . lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee." I felt assured that the Lord would take care of my Chinese helpers.

Heavy loud knocks sound on the door. My heart pounds with equal loudness. Louder pounding. That gate to the yard is closed. The Chinese teacher and I confer quietly. Shall we open it? We must. At the gate stand some soldiers who demand living quarters for others who are following.

"Your new home is the servant's quarters," he tells me roughly.

He stalks through the house, putting a sign on each door to indicate which rooms are reserved for officers and their helpers, while I watch in bewilderment. A little later other soldiers come to tell me that I can live upstairs even though they are going to occupy the rest of the house. Live with them? My mind is made up quickly; I cannot stay here.

Sadly I packed my bedding, clothes and a few other things into a small room that we had planned to use as a bathroom sometime in the future. The furniture was left where it was. My housemaid packed a few things that were in the kitchen and took them and Luella, my orphan, to the

home of some poor neighbors. We waited for the officers who were going to occupy my house to arrive, for I did not want to turn it over to common soldiers. As we waited, the house swarmed with soldiers, many of them mere teenage boys. They ran through the front door slamming it as they came and went, shouting noisily.

Two or three hours later the communist General Chu Teh and his officers arrived. I had been told that he had studied four years in Germany and one year in Russia, so I greeted him in German. I told him that my parents belonged to the poorer class of farmers in America and that I had come to China to help the poor and to bring the Gospel to the Chinese. Because he had come to our city, I would let him use my house.

"Is there anything you want protected?" he asked, much to my surprise.

I led him to the small room where a few of my belongings were stored, then to the two other rooms where furniture belonging to some missionaries on furlough had been placed for safekeeping. General Chu ordered the soldiers who had moved into these rooms to get out, wrote an order on the door of the tiny room where I had placed my belongings, and assured me they would be safe. Then the teachers and I left. In my heart I did not trust the general, but I did trust my almighty Father in heaven.

The next two nights and days we spent in the home to which my housemaid and Luella had fled. We bolted doors and piled chests, tables and chairs against them. Neighbors left homes to see each other only after dark, which was the way I learned that the communists were planning to take Pastor Kwot and me prisoner. Would I never have peace? Again my spirit was in turmoil.

Flight seemed impossible because the streets were filled with communist soldiers or people they used as spies. After much discussion, we decided that one of our men should carry a small basket of supplies I would need for my journey; I would carry my Bible, some cash, and a few

other personal necessities in a wicker bag. The pastor, the man who would carry my things, and I would each leave by a different gate, but would meet at a spot beyond the river some distance from the village. The Lord was with us; all three of us got out of the city safely and without incident.

Early the next morning the pastor left to find his family, which had fled in a different direction. I decided to move farther away from the city to a village where two teachers of our girls' school were living. From here I sent a message to the two missionary women to meet me there. I waited one day, two days, three days, a week, for Adelgunda and Sophia to join me, yet they did not come. I feared that the messenger had never reached Engteng. Perhaps the Reds had already taken the two women captive? If they were killed, I would be the only white missionary woman in that part of China. I waited several more days, but no news came nor did my co-missionaries make their appearance. Finally I hired a man to go to Engteng to find out what had become of the two foreign women. He found them alive, well and busy. They sent back word for me to join them. I lost no time in coming out of hiding.

About a month after Pastor Kwot and I had fled out of Shanghang, he surprised us with a visit at Engteng to report that the Red Army had left; Nationalist Commander Liang was back in the city; conditions were fairly stable. Would I return?

In Shanghang I found that the Lord had answered my prayers. None of my native workers had been molested or killed, even though some of the people of the city had been arrested, some mistreated, and about a hundred of the upper class executed. None of the mission buildings had been destroyed, and nearly everything I had left in the house remained intact, in spite of the fact that three companies of soldiers had lived in it.

At this time the Mennonite Brethren Board of Foreign Missions had two mission compounds at Shanghang. One was outside the city near the limits of the eastern suburb

where the F. J. Wiens family used to live and where we had the Bible school buildings. The other buildings were inside the city, consisting of a residence for missionaries, the church building, an old people's home, and the girls' school. These two compounds were about a mile apart. I was living in the city near the girls' school and old people's home.

It was soon evident that I could not watch the property at both locations. The compound outside the city was in charge of one of the church council members, who had a difficult time because soldiers wanted to move into the compound and make it a training ground. We knew that if the army moved into our buildings, they would deteriorate rapidly. The church council decided that Adelgunda Priebe should return from Engteng to this compound, for the soldiers usually respected the foreigner's rights. She could open a dispensary there and continue her language study.

This left Sophia Richert alone with the work in Engteng. When she first came to China in 1912 her older sister Mary had accompanied her. However, after about three years she died, making life very lonely for Sophia. Also, the restless conditions in China kept one in constant tension, so she arranged for a furlough. Just as we were eating our farewell meal together, a cablegram arrived stating that Sophia's father had died. The next day, escorted by a number of soldiers for protection against robbers, Sophia and one of our teachers hired a boat to take them to the coast and back to America. Adelgunda and I felt lonely without her. Now we were the only Mennonite Brethren missionaries in the area.

More struggles were followed by victories. Commander Liang and his soldiers, who had looted one of our mission compounds, were still in the city. Again he asked us whether he could move into the Bible school on the compound where Miss Priebe was living. I knew soldiers had no right to live in or use our mission property, for the Nationalist government had promised to protect all mission property. One high-ranking officer wrote me that a group of

high officials often came together for prayer meetings, asking God to guide the ship of state aright. He asked me to help them pray for China and its responsible officials. But how to deal with the rebellious soldiers of Shanghang was another question. When someone refused to let them have their way or offended them, he was likely to be arrested, mistreated, put in jail, or even sentenced to death.

We decided we must see Commander Liang to tell him we could not meet his request. To go into his courtyard was like entering a lion's den, yet the pastor, one of our teachers, Miss Priebe and I ventured to meet him. We found the commander and a number of his officers sitting around a table in his office. After we were seated, we told him that our mission in China was to preach peace through the Gospel of Jesus Christ and that it would be against our principles to change the Bible school into a school where men were trained to fight. We kindly asked the commander to keep his soldiers off the mission property.

Either Commander Liang did not have control over his men or he did not intend to honor our request. A few days later soldiers arrived at the Bible school building with brooms to sweep it and move in. What should we do? What could we do?

The idea struck me that I should write a letter to the commander, stating our principles again very clearly, and informing him that if he moved in, it was not according to our wish but only because he was a man of power. I wrote also that we had letters from the Chinese government promising us soldiers would not molest mission property.

When some of the national brethren read the letter, they thought the tone was too strong. It would only upset the commander and his soldiers, who would then mistreat us even more. A number of them felt it should not be sent. But one of the most spiritual brethren said, "That is just what we should tell these soldiers. That letter contains some good doctrine for them." With fervent prayers the letter was

sent. In the meantime the soldiers not only moved into the Bible school, but threatened to move into the girls' school as well.

About two days after General Liang had received the letter, a Chinese co-worker came to tell me that the soldiers were moving out of the Bible school. They disappeared, never to come back again. The new troops who replaced them were much better disciplined and did not try to move onto our property or bother us in any way. Again the Lord had led us and supplied us with needed wisdom and tact.

With a different set of soldiers in control in Shanghang, the political situation improved. We could write the mission board that conditions were more stable and that Mr. and Mrs. J. S. Dick, who had left in 1927, could return. With joy and relief we welcomed them back late in 1928, happy that someone else was there to shoulder part of the responsibility. Upon their return, we decided that Mr. Dick and I should go to Engteng for about a month and, with the Lord's help, try to iron out some of the differences among the workers. Mrs. Dick would supervise the girls' school.

One morning shortly after he had returned to Shanghang, I was awakened by the native workers' excited voices telling me that a large army of communists was coming to Engteng. Quickly I packed my few things once again while the workers tried to find a man to carry my baggage to Fen Shih. No one could be found, for nearly the whole city was getting ready to evacuate. Finally we found two women to take my things and those of the native co-workers to a village less than a mile away. The roads were thronged with people fleeing before the approaching communists. *A Catholic priest had already been captured by them* was the unpleasant news which reached our ears. Was it my turn next?

Again I was faced with the question of whether I should flee or stay. How many more times must I make this decision? I took my problem to the Lord, who directed me to leave. We hired two men as guides and prayed the Lord would give strength and courage to cross the river, swollen

and turbulent with heavy rains.

After a short night, we stepped outside to begin our journey. Only a few night sounds broke the early morning silence. Heavy dark clouds hid the trail from us. Briefly we had prayer with the pastor's wife, for we were concerned about her safety as well as for her children. One of our guides carried a small lantern whose wick was little thicker than a telephone wire, but large enough to show the direction we were to walk. We crossed the rushing stream safely to the other side. After the river we sludged through rice fields for some distance, walking on the narrow ridges of dirt between water-covered fields. Everytime our feet slipped, we slid into a muddy rice patch.

At dawn we turned onto the road. The guides cautioned us to very quiet, for they feared the enemy was near. About thirty people, mostly women and children, had joined our flight party. Many of the women carried their babies strapped to their backs while in their hands they managed bundles of clothes or food. The children also carried bundles. To save a water buffalo cow from being captured by the communists, they led it with a rope. Sandals made of grass were tied to its feet so it would not slip or slide on the steep mountain.

Up and down the mountain trails we climbed in a long single solemn file. The rain persisted, causing the steep steps made of dirt to turn smooth and slippery beneath our feet. When the rain let up, we had reached the top of a mountain where the sun shone brightly. Streams of water rushed down the mountain slopes. Down in the valley snow-white, fluffy clouds drifted softly. Green plants carpeted the terrain, adding to the beauty of the scene. We stopped momentarily to gaze at this rich sight. Truly nature was praising its Creator. Only man had sunk into the mire of sin and refused to glorify His God who had blessed him so bountifully.

Two nights were spent in a village where the people gave us only kindness even though they knew it was dangerous

to receive me into their home. On the third day some men came from Feng Shih with the news that the road was safe for travel. That evening after dark we reached our new destination, but even here I had no peace of mind.

Information filtered through that a Dr. Hollman from a neighboring mission had been kidnapped by the Reds; all other news I disregarded as rumors. From Shanghang more definite word arrived that an army of communists was robbing, looting and killing in that area. My concern was for our native Christians, the Dick family, and Adelgunda Priebe.

From my hiding place I watched the police lead unwilling, sullen and downcast captives, bound securely with ropes, into the village where I was staying. Many wounded were also carried in. At such times the local villagers were beside themselves with fear. Some fled. Others barricaded themselves behind doors. I too was weary and much afraid.

The house in which I was hiding was located near the Han River. Day and night I heard the steady rushing of the mountain stream past my window. As long as I clung closely to the Lord and His promises, the peace in my heart was like that river—it was there day and night. One evening I looked up at the sky to watch the thousands of stars shining in the darkness. The words of an old German children's song came to me:

Do you know how many little stars
Are shining in the blue dome of heaven?

Do you know how many clouds

Are floating all over the world?

God, the Lord, has counted them all,

Not one of their great number is missing.

If the Lord knew all the clouds and the stars, surely He knew I was in need and would not forget me. I felt comforted.

By and by news came that the Dick family and Adelgunda Priebe had fled from Shanghang upriver as far as I had fled downriver. Would we ever see each other

again? At the time, it seemed hard to imagine a reunion.

The news from Engteng was not better. The Reds reigned there with terror. The mission had been ransacked, some buildings badly damaged, and others destroyed. After two or three weeks some Nationalist soldiers came upriver and the communists began to retreat, leaving Shanghang long enough for the Dicks and Miss Priebe to come out of hiding, pack some things and travel downriver. What a reunion we had after that long and eventful month of separation. Together we traveled to the coast, where the Northern Baptist missionaries received us kindly.

I planned to stay at the coast until conditions inland would permit me to visit the Christians at Shanghang and make a tour of our outstations before my furlough was due. After waiting over four months at the coast, I decided to go home instead, for the stress and strain was beginning to affect my health. Would it ever be possible to do mission work in the interior of this great country again? The Lord gave me the assurance that I would return to China to serve Him there. With this promise in mind, I took courage to plan my furlough.

I entrusted Luella, my orphan, to the Dicks, for it was impossible to take her along to America. When I arrived at the coast for the voyage across the Pacific Ocean, I had one change of Chinese style clothing, my Bible, my account book, and my diary. I borrowed some American dresses from one of the ladies there until I could make some for myself. Some of my other belongings came later with some Christians who succeeded in coming to Swatow.

The Lord had called me to take the Gospel to those who had not heard. Without sending an application to any mission board, He brought me to China supported by the Mennonite Brethren Conference. From the time of my call until I entered the work, eleven years had passed, more than four of them in the American school. About two years had been spent in the girls' school. He had prepared me for this work by filling my heart with love for the Chinese who needed Christ and had opened the way to be a witness for

Him among them. That way had led through fierce struggles and trials of faith, through fear and danger. But I praised the Lord, for He had been with me, and would continue to be with me. I would return to China.

4

THE JAPANESE ARRIVE

I felt lonely as I crossed the ocean to America, for none of my co-workers was with me nor could I spot a Protestant missionary anywhere aboard ship. Then one evening I happened to sit with a group of passengers where an old gray-haired man was discussing his missionary work in Tibet and northwest China. From then on I had a good friend who, like a father, gave me good advice. I was discouraged and perplexed because our mission compound at Shanghang had been looted and the buildings destroyed. How could I give encouraging reports to the churches in the homeland, I asked him.

"Tell the people exactly what happened," he advised quite bluntly.

Later in my cabin it dawned on me that the kingdom of God does not consist of buildings, but resides in the heart of man. The buildings weren't the most important part of our work. Reviewing my experiences with God and with the Chinese people, I saw that I had much material for encouraging reports. Later, this proved to be true. Wherever I traveled in the United States and Canada, I had many opportunities to tell with much joy and liberty what God had done in China and how he had protected me in times of great danger.

My plans were to spend two years on furlough. The first year I attended Central Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Kansas. Because conditions on our South China field continued to be restless, the Dicks and Miss Priebe left the field to take up a work in Suiyuan Province

in North China while the missionaries of the Krimmer Mennonite Brethren Conference who were working there took a much needed furlough. They took with them our three little Chinese orphan girls: Luella, my girl; Esther, Sophia Richert's girl; and Lenora, who was cared for by Adelgunda Priebe. After the South China field was evacuated, I knew there was not much hope that the mission board would send me back to our field for some time.

While I waited for the Lord to open the way back to China, I spent nearly a year looking after some sick and lonely relatives. Another year I taught in a rural school. Still the door to China remained closed. Daily I wondered why the mission board could not send me to another place of service among the Chinese. And if they didn't, would I be content to stay in the homeland? Missionaries worked more or less unhindered in other parts of China. Should I try to go out without the financial backing of the board? Because I wanted to do God's will above everything else, I asked Him to reveal it to me by two definite signs. Like Gideon, I put out a fleece.

The first sign should be a letter from some field where missionaries were being supported without organized church financial backing. It should reach me toward the end of May. At that time I was attending teachers' college. When I arrived home the first days in June, my parents told me a letter had arrived a few days earlier from H. C. Bartel in North Central China. Mr. and Mrs. Bartel had founded the first Mennonite mission field in China about 1905 as an interdenominational mission. The missionaries and their support came from various Mennonite groups in both America and Europe. Later it was incorporated as the China Mennonite Mission Society. In his letter to me, Mr. Bartel stated that there was much work in that field. Would I come and work for them since the South China field seemed to be closed? Because the workers of that field did not receive regular support from a mission board, but were dependent upon special gifts from God's people, I knew

that God had given me my first sign.

For a second sign I asked the Lord to send me the money to return to China. I did not tell anyone about this, for it was a secret between the Lord and me. One day, while I was teaching a rural school, a road grader passed between the school and my boarding place. That evening as I walked home I saw something lying by the roadside. I picked up a tarnished five-cent piece. The Lord had given me my first gift for the journey back to China. I thanked Him for it.

Later, one summer while traveling, I was asked to tell a group of Christians some of my experiences in China. When they took an offering for "my return trip to China," I was almost tempted to ask them, "Who told you to give me this for my trip to China?" By the time I was ready to go back to China, I had enough money for my trip and also to replace those things which had been stolen from me in China. My furlough had extended to almost five years, from December 1929 to late 1934, but during this time I had learned many lessons of patience and trust. As those months rolled into years, I held onto His promise that He would be with me whithersoever I went. So my convictions for work in China remained steady.

August, 1934—I had an assignment in China and enough money for my return journey. The time to say farewell to my loved ones again had finally come. It was not easy, for my previous experience had taught me that working in restless China would be difficult. Yet my father's attitude toward my going was a comfort and encouragement.

Because I was going to work in North China under the China Mennonite Mission Society, I had to learn the Mandarin or official language of the country, or the people living in this area would not understand my southern Hakka dialect. After arriving in China, I spent about twelve weeks in language study at Peiping, but when a person is over forty, a new language does not come quickly. Yet the Lord was my help. Even though I always spoke Chinese with a brogue, I got along very well during my flights from

the Japanese later on and in my travels through ten provinces in each of which the dialect differed considerably.

My last term at the Peiping language school came to a close a few days before Christmas. When the Dicks and Adelgunda Priebe had gone to North China, they had taken our three orphans along. Now Adelgunda had returned to America on furlough and the Dicks were planning to leave shortly. It was now my duty to take care of the three girls, so I went north to get them, traveling two thousand miles by truck, train, car, wagon, rickshaw, and wheelbarrow, eventually arriving at Tsaohsien, Shantung, the central station of the China Mennonite Mission Society in north-east China. H. C. Bartel supervised the entire mission from this station together with his children, Loyal H. and Susan Bartel.

After the three girls were safely settled in a mission school about five or six hours by train from Tsaohsien, I settled down to serious language study again. An old teacher was engaged for me, who had earned his B.A. degree from an old-style school which upheld rote memorization in a singsong way as the best way to learn a language. The dialect on this field differed mostly from the Peiping dialect in intonation. Because the Chinese language has no alphabet, every word must be memorized. At present a phonetic system is in use by which the pronunciation of characters is made easier. This helps illiterate Christians to learn to read more easily. To keep in touch with my three girls, I learned to write Chinese letters, a tedious process which some missionaries considered a waste of time, but which I found helpful in remembering difficult words.

By spring when I was appointed to go to Ningling in Honan Province to help Miss Aganetha Regier, I had read through my Chinese Bible. When I came across a word I didn't know, I looked it up in the dictionary and wrote the pronunciation in the margin of my Bible. In Genesis 50, which has 32 verses, I wrote in 102 pronunciations. When I got to the last chapter of Revelation with 21 verses, I wrote in only four pronunciations.

Well do I remember the first two times the Bible woman and I went to the villages to conduct meetings. We rode on wheelbarrows or rickshaws and both times dust storms overtook us. At first I wrote out my messages and memorized them. Later I could preach more fluently without memorizing them. To find out if the people understood me, I asked questions as I went along. If they answered correctly, I rejoiced, for my language was being understood.

The Lord had a large field of work for me not only in direct evangelism but also in conducting Bible classes. One of my diaries of this time contains the record of my first year of village work: a Bible woman and I had visited 124 villages in which we conducted meetings at which at least ten or more people listened to our Gospel stories and messages. We also did much personal visitation. In all we were privileged to tell the Gospel to 3,734 people the first year of village work. I was well satisfied with our beginning.

But the rumblings of war were beginning to reach us even there in North China. The Japanese had invaded Manchuria in 1931 and set up a puppet government at Manchukuo. In 1937 the Japanese militarists provoked a new incident which led to the direct invasion of China. When the Japanese conquered that part of China where the China Mennonite Mission Society carried on its work, I was still in Ningling, Honan. Before the enemy arrived in person, we heard rumors of their steady advance. Before long the roar of cannons rumbled ominously in the distance. Bombers flew over oftener and dropped bombs on the city of Ningling. Every day we heard of cities that had fallen into Japanese hands. Some fleeing Chinese army nurses accompanied by a few wounded soldiers stopped hurriedly at our mission station for a drink and food, which neighbors brought in for them. They told us in quiet tones how fast the enemy moved and how cruel they were when they captured prisoners. We listened with fear and perplexity.

The next day was Sunday. As the Christians and other villagers came to church, we heard distant shooting but no one seemed to know what it was all about. Some said that Chinese soldiers had found some robbers lingering near the city and were shooting at them. Yet even this explanation was not satisfactory. We shortened our services to allow the people to go home earlier.

About two o'clock in the afternoon the shooting increased in intensity. The sharp rat-a-tat-tat of machine guns and the roar of cannon drowned out every other noise. The Japanese had arrived. Without warning, our compound suddenly overflowed with frightened refugees, mostly our neighbors as well as some Christians from the city. With the refugees came their livestock. Two large oxen and a donkey were crowded into a small woodshed between the church and one of the servant's living quarters. The church building was crammed with several hundred villagers who barely escaped sudden death when a piece of shrapnel shrieked through the air, landing on the little shed and killing one ox. The other two animals were so badly injured, they had to be killed.

Though the fiercest shooting lasted only about two or three hours, the villagers did not return to their homes when it ended. Many stayed for three or four months, for the Japanese harassed everyone outside our compound. One young man who had fallen into their hands was brought to us one night after dark. He had been stabbed until his entrails fell out.

With so many people in our yard, sanitary conditions were difficult to maintain. Many children died of scarletina and others suffered from dysentery, scabies, and eczema. To escape persecution by the Japanese, some of the men had burned out their tattoos signifying they had served in the army. These burnings often resulted in huge festering sores. A Christian woman who had been wounded moved into the yard. Her home had been in the battle area. Every day we made the rounds, cleaning sores and wounds with antiseptic solution. Our half-gallon of mineral oil we doled out

sparingly to those with dysentery.

Because the majority of the refugees lived in the neighborhood, they smuggled in grain from their homes and fields at night when the Japanese withdrew to the walled city. Soon after the battle, the Japanese allowed us to have several big bags of rice which the Chinese soldiers had left behind, which we gave to the refugees on our compound. Thus the Lord provided food for us and the Chinese during the battle.

The fighting between the Japanese and the Chinese took place during the last days in May when the weather had already turned quite warm. Dead bodies were strewn around our compound, yet even after three days the Japanese would not bury or remove them. The stench was getting unbearable and the flies settled more thickly on the decaying flesh each day. Something had to be done.

After much prayer one of our Christian brethren and I ventured into the city to get permission from the Japanese commander to bury the dead. He acquiesced readily. So the fourth day after the shooting about six of our refugee men and I tried to dispose of the rotting bodies. Evidently the officers had not informed the sentries on the city wall that he had given us permission to do so, for they began to shoot over our heads. By and by they stopped when we paid no attention to them.

We buried about forty bodies lying around our compound that afternoon. The men did the work while I went with them for protection, for the Japanese respected the Americans more than they did the Chinese at that time. At the end of the day the Japanese officer sent a messenger to thank us for what we had done and invited us to continue our good deeds by coming into the city. There we buried another forty bodies. In the city we found more dead than living Chinese, for the inhabitants had deserted the place and left it to the Japanese.

The countryside remained restless as Chinese soldiers and guerrillas from time to time skirmished with the Japanese. When the Japanese became too annoyed by the guerrilla

attacks they raided the countryside, temporarily ending all Chinese opposition. So for about three months our village work was brought to a complete standstill although we were able to have prayer and devotional meetings every day with the refugees in our compound.

Because the village people could not come to us, we went to them. On one occasion we were stopped by a Chinese guerrilla officer as we approached the village gate. The guerrillas suspected that someone had reported them to the Japanese and now questioned everyone who went in and out of the village. On another occasion we stopped at the home of an enquirer but could find no private spot to speak to the woman because guerrilla soldiers swarmed about. So we preached to them as well as to her. After they had listened attentively for some time, one of the officers exclaimed, "What they preach is good; I like to listen to them." Then he turned to tell us that some of the soldiers were ignorant and did not understand what we were talking about, but that we should go on with our work.

One evening after supper we conducted our regular devotional services with Christians and enquirers outside the village chapel because the weather was warm. About halfway through the service, heavy shooting erupted on all sides. The guerrillas had returned to loot the whole village. All the men, except three who were at our service, fled while the women ran into the chapel. The leader of the small group of believers and I remained outside.

Soon about eleven men, each with a flashlight in one hand and a pistol in the other, walked rapidly into the yard, demanding that no one leave or move. Our host explained that this was a church and that a missionary was present to conduct a meeting. He did not understand. Then I spoke up and told them I was an American missionary. Immediately he understood, for he ordered his men to go back, but cautioned us to stay where we were for the night. About twenty or thirty women huddled silently in the chapel, fearful of the outcome. I placed my cot in the yard where it

was cooler and where I would be more aware of what was happening. Though we were not harmed, nearly every home in the village was looted that night; cattle, donkeys, plows, furniture, clothing, even dishes and chopsticks were taken. Only a few Christian homes were missed by the guerillas.

After the Japanese conquered that part of China where we were working, they treated the Chinese maliciously at first. In turn the Chinese hated them even more. However, soon the Japanese changed to friendlier tactics to keep what they had taken by war and force. As the Chinese saw the attitude of their conquerors changing, they gained courage to reopen their businesses and work their fields. The common people carried on as best they could even though the Japanese and guerrillas continued to fight each other, usually in the villages. Although the Christians could not come to our churches at the main mission stations, they continued to hold meetings at most of the outstations.

By this time I knew that the Lord had not only brought me back to China, but that He went with me wherever I went; in the villages among the guerrillas, in the midst of battle, while burying the dead, or while facing Japanese soldiers. He was always there to give faith and courage in all situations.

5

ITINERANT MINISTRY

I had spent nearly three years in the Ningling District in Honan when one of the missionaries returned from her furlough, freeing me to return to Tsaohsien, Shantung, to work in that large district with its thirty outstations.

As soon as the people were less busy with harvesting and field work, one or two helpers and I went to some of the villages to look up Christians and those interested in the Gospel. When the villagers had time to attend Bible classes, we stayed from ten days to two weeks to conduct a Bible school.

In the winter of 1940 a Chinese helper and I conducted Bible schools in two places. At the last place, despite an encouraging enrollment of twenty-one young women, girls and boys, we had moments of difficulty. One day the Japanese soldiers moved into the village. The Chinese guerrillas had fled at the first rumor that the Japanese were coming, so the enemy did not find them. With a shrewd wisdom, the village people lined up in the streets and waved banners to welcome the Japanese. Though it was a mock welcome, for some of the guerrillas took part, the Japanese soldiers accepted it as real and did not bother the villagers at this place.

The last evening at the same village we held a Christmas program, the first one the village had ever had. The little chapel overflowed with attentive listeners. After a Christmas message, the students recited Scripture verses, and some of the girls told the Christmas story. The entire group sang songs they had learned, after which my helper and I sang a duet, the first harmonized song most of the villagers

had ever heard. When we returned in spring, all twenty-one students had become Christians and, in addition, seven others came to Tsaohsien wanting to be baptized.

The day after our Christmas program, we stopped at a village where we knew a number of enquirers lived. Our arrival had been delayed by the poor traveling conditions, but in a short time the people had gathered for a meeting.

No building was large enough to hold the crowd, so the services were held outdoors on wet ground with a strong, cold north wind blowing. My helper preached to the standing crowd for about an hour. Although my throat was sore, I spoke at least an hour also. After this I thought the people would be glad to go to the comfort of their homes, but instead they asked us to teach them some songs. My throat felt raw and rough, but I tried. However, even a period of singing did not satisfy the people.

After the singing the leader of the group asked, "Tell us of Noah's ark." I told them the story and explained how Christ has become our Ark of Salvation. By now it was about three o'clock. I was sore, cold, and tired. Suddenly it dawned on a few listeners that we had missed dinner, so the group was dismissed.

My helper walked to one home surrounded by part of the crowd and I to another home with another large group. The people couldn't get close enough to me. I was lucky to have a chair to sit on so that the space between us kept the lice from migrating from their bodies to mine. A few people found seats on a bed and on narrow benches. Though my throat was still sore, I taught them some Bible verses, how to pray to the living God, and a chorus or two.

I had not expected the people to trudge back after dark through the muddy streets on a cold night like this, but I was mistaken. The house filled up again, for the people were hungry for the Word of God. Again the plan of God's salvation through Christ was explained to them, and they were told how to worship the living God.

Questions popped up here and there. Some wanted to

know the difference between Confucius' teaching and Bible doctrine, why we didn't burn incense when we worshiped God, and other questions. By then my throat was too sore to continue, but my host turned to the women and admonished them "Now learn all you can from the missionary teacher. Tomorrow she leaves us and you will regret you have not learned more from her." So I started all over again to review choruses, Bible verses and prayers. Finally my host dismissed the crowd, and I could think about getting some sleep.

That night I slept in a house about thirty by twelve feet. One end of it was a bedroom where a sick boy moaned restlessly through the night. At the other end was a manger before which a large ox chewed its cud placidly. My cot and bedding had been placed in the center room, where I had been teaching. That night as I waited for sleep to come, the Lord spoke to me. He showed me how this sick and suffering child symbolized the sin-sick people of the village who longed for healing. The people of the village had stood for hours in the cold wind on wet ground to catch a word about Christ. I forgot all about my sore throat and my weariness and praised the Lord for the privilege He had given me of being in China.

6

RIPE UNTO HARVEST

The China Mennonite Mission Society field in northeast China was divided into six districts. All of these districts except one had a main station at which some missionaries were located. The one without a central station, the Hsien Kaocheng area, was worked by Chinese Christians and missionaries of the other districts.

Although I had more than I could do in the Tsaohsien district, the Christians at Hsien Kaocheng asked me again and again to come to them, for they felt neglected. But this was wartime and travel was difficult. The Japanese had established themselves in the county seat of that district, and the Chinese guerrillas, roaming troops of communists and other robber bands fought each other in the villages or the Japanese as the opportunity presented itself. If I went to that area I would probably meet some groups of soldiers and possibly get sandwiched between them in one of their skirmishes.

But convinced that God would take care of me as He had promised, I made plans to make an extensive trip to Hsien Kaocheng, the station farthest away from Tsaohsien. I took with me a large supply of Bibles, New Testaments, hymnbooks, posters and study materials. These supplies, my coat and a few personal items were loaded onto a two-wheeled cart drawn by my helper. I drove a one-horse sulky packed with my suitcase, bedding roll and feed for the horse.

We started out Saturday and arrived at Hsien Kaocheng Sunday morning about churchtime. As we neared the church, I wondered if anyone would be present. The

evangelist in charge of the group of believers there had had to leave hastily because of difficulty with the Japanese. Yet what a surprise awaited us. The church was filled and the people were standing at doors and windows listening to no one else but Tuan, one of the many orphans whom Mr. and Mrs. H. C. Bartel had taken care of in their large orphanage. While with them, unlike many others, he confessed his sins and repented easily; however, after a few days he returned to his former vices such as gambling, stealing, and sexual immorality. He had even murdered two people, besides smuggling and using opium. Yet Tuan and another former reprobate named Chang were in charge of the service, waiting for us to come.

At the close of the service my helper announced that we planned to conduct a ten-day Bible school. The next morning men, women, boys and girls came from all directions. Some walked three or four miles, carrying millet, carrots and sweet potatoes for the noon meal. They ranged in age from ten to eighty years with a total number of about forty-five, not counting the small children who were dismissed after the opening exercises. The old women who could not learn to read met outdoors in a class by themselves where local Christian women taught them to memorize Bible verses and hymns.

The remaining students were divided into two classes, one taught by my helper and the other by me. After ten days of teaching, some of the brightest students could read slowly by the phonetic method. How thankful they were when they could read the Word themselves, and what an encouragement their achievement was to the other believers. Besides reading we taught Old Testament history, Life of Christ, memorization of Bible verses and singing. At the close of the school, our students showed their thankfulness by preparing a celebration feast and by taking up an offering which left about \$28.00 in the treasury after expenses had been paid.

After our school closed in Hsien Kaocheng, we moved on to a village to the southeast. After this school closed,

three men who had been our students and who were chiefs of robber bands and guerrilla leaders, were arrested and killed. One boy, about eleven years old, attended all three of our first schools and finally, to his great joy, learned to read.

At another place, one of our older outstations, the people did not know we were coming, but within half an hour the room they used as a chapel was full of people. I set the Biblewoman to work. She taught them Bible verses and the words of some hymns while I tried to rest. By nine o'clock about seventy-five people had gathered for an outdoor meeting. Only a few of the older people had brought small benches along to sit on. For us they brought out chairs.

Saul, my helper, spoke over an hour; the evangelist spoke more than an hour. I did the same. After nearly four hours of listening I thought, "Surely they will have heard enough for today and return to their homes." But I was mistaken. the leader announced another service for the afternoon. They should now go to the village street to buy bread for their noon meal. After another service of about an hour and a half, I was anxious to rest, but the women grabbed my arms and dress, and some of the men clung to my baggage. "You are not leaving us today. You must stay at least one night and tell us more of the good doctrine." Finally the evangelist came to my rescue and told them I would come again and bring literature with me and stay a few days. Reluctantly they let me and my workers go. Later on I returned and spent a week with them.

On this journey the atmosphere in the villages continued to be restless. One day the Japanese battled with the guerrillas in a village about half a mile away, but though the people were very disturbed, the Japanese did not kill and loot where I was. Here we saw person after person come to Christ. One woman, very anxious to hear the Word of God, stole away to attend Bible school. One day her husband found her New Testament and burned it. Though he beat her, she continued to pray for his salvation. Several months later God answered her prayers, and together they sold Christian literature in the villages.

At another place a woman healed in answer to prayer was brought to church by her son who had never been to church before. After the close of the service I went out with the women to talk to them. Soon I heard loud praying in the chapel. I went back in to see the pastor and several Christians praying earnestly for the young man who was lying on the floor, gnashing his teeth, apparently demon-possessed.

I joined the brethren in prayer. Then I told the young man to pray the words I would say: "Dear Jesus, forgive my sins through your blood and deliver me from this evil power." Yet he could not pray, for something seemed to be holding his tongue. The pastor asked him his name, and he answered, "Legion." We prayed again, after which he asked me, "Missionary Foote, how did you come to Lao Pei Kuan so peacefully?" I told him that God took care of me and brought me here in peace. Then he said, "I believe in God too." When I urged him to pray, he finally said, "Jesus, Jesus," after which he calmed down. Before long he got up rejoicing, delivered of the demon. I found out he had never been subject to epilepsy or been demon-possessed before. I asked him how he knew my name, for this was the first time we had met. He told me he did not know my name. However, the demons knew it, for they addressed me by my name.

Three months had passed since we had started on this tour. It was time for me to return home to the main station at Tsaohsien, for my clothing needed cleaning and mending and my hair needed to be deloused. During these months robber chiefs had attended our meetings; several times we had been in danger of getting caught between the shooting lines of the Japanese and the guerrillas. In Lao Pei Kuan a demon had spoken to me through a young man whom he had possessed. Even though at times I had been extremely tired, the Lord had once again provided.

7

IN HIDING FROM THE JAPANESE

A few more weeks and the Christmas festivities would begin, I thought, as I once again packed the two-wheeled cart with my cot, bedding, clothing, and enough other personal effects to last me about a month. By Christmas I'd be back home at the main station from this trip to some of the more neglected outstations.

Before my cart puller and I left the mission compound at Tsaohsien in Shantung Province, I turned to the house of the Loyal Bartels, fellow missionaries, to say good-bye to Mrs. Bartel as I usually did before I left on a trip for the villages. But she was busy in church, teaching a girls' Bible class. So I left without any farewells. I would be back soon.

On the road to the first of the preaching places that morning we had to pass over one of the dikes of the Yellow River. As we neared the spot where we expected to cross, the crackle of machine gun fire and the shots of rifles burst upon us. Fleeing people scattered over the top of the dike like frightened chickens. Before we arrived at the dike, several truckloads of Japanese soldiers drove slowly toward us. Courteously they stopped us, asked my nationality, where we were going, and if I knew where any Chinese guerrillas had fled to. I replied as best I could, inwardly disturbed by what we had just witnessed, yet aware that Japanese-Chinese skirmishes continued to be a daily reality.

For about ten days we worked in the outlying villages, preaching and teaching without being molested. The people in these villages received few visits from us because our mission did not have enough evangelists and Bible women

so one could be stationed in each village. So they welcomed us warmly each time we came.

On the first Sunday in December we were at Chia Chuang where a large crowd of believers had met outside the home of a leading Christian. Just before the service was to begin, Loyal Bartel from Tsaohsien appeared unexpectedly. After preaching to the crowd, he continued on his way to several other outstations. He left with me my mail, including a letter from America. Little did I know that that was the last letter I would receive from my homeland for many months, nor that I would not see Loyal again for nearly five years.

The date of this casual encounter was December 7, 1941, the day the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, an event which was to change the course of my life and disturb the lives of nationals and missionaries alike for many years. But as yet I knew nothing.

The next day, all Americans and British citizens in China were suddenly declared enemies by the Japanese and taken into semi-custody in their houses and compounds, well guarded by Japanese soldiers. Though the Japanese had been at war with China since 1937, foreigners such as I were not considered their official enemy and therefore were left alone. This soon changed.

The evening of this momentous day my helper and I were still in Chia Chuang at an evening service, oblivious of the news resounding in the urban centers, until a messenger brought me a letter smuggled out of the mission compound. It stated briefly that my missionary friends had been taken into custody by the Japanese soldiers and expected to be placed in a concentration camp at any time. Loyal was still unaccounted for. They suggested that I remain hidden.

War . . . prison . . . concentration camp . . . hide . . . hide . . . hide . . . the words bored holes in my mind. As my eyes skimmed rapidly over the note again, trying to find some additional meaning, I heard the Chinese Christians before me singing in unison, "Jesus loves me, this I know." Out of

long habit, my lips mouthed the words, but my heart refused to sing. Was this the way the Lord showed us He loved us? My mind refused to believe what I had read.

I had to make a quick decision. Should I go to the city to give myself up to the Japanese? The distance was a short twelve miles. Should I try to flee to Free China? That meant slipping through the Japanese line of guards, threading my way through the dangerous no-man's land, and then finding an opening in the Chinese lines.

My thoughts darted this way and that like a wild bird suddenly caged, finding no answer. What should I do? Whom could I talk to? Certainly not to the Chinese before me, for they would get upset at once and reveal my whereabouts. I prayed silently, desperately, "Lord, show me what to do."

Hastily I penned a note back to my fellow missionaries to contact me through a messenger in a village farther away and near a large guerrilla camp.

Early the next morning I began my flight from the Japanese to the appointed village. But even here I knew I was not safe. If the Japanese suddenly raided the guerrilla camp nearby, they would find me and certainly would not be lenient with me for having run away. I was also concerned about my fellow missionaries whose lives might be in jeopardy if I did not turn up. Furthermore, the Japanese would probably offer a big reward for the American woman who had escaped them. Many Chinese would not be able to resist the temptation to make some easy money for turning me in. My thoughts drove each other in wearisome circles of confusion, even as my body rested in the place of shelter.

Christmas Day dawned rainy, cold and dreary. I attended no festivities, not even a service, in my place of hiding. My thoughts drifted to Tsaohsien where the Christians were gathered for a service . . . to the homeland where my loved ones—mother, father, sisters, and brothers—had come together for a family reunion. Here I was, alone and

surrounded by danger, with no place to go.

For comfort I turned to the Christmas story and the angel's words to Mary, the mother of Jesus: "Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favor with God." The impossible had happened to Mary, surely God could also undertake for me. He could keep me out of the hands of the Japanese whom I feared. Certainly He could also protect my friends in Tsaohsien. My tension eased somewhat.

One morning I sent a man to investigate a possible road into Free China. After many hours he returned with the report that escape was too dangerous and that I should wait. From December 11, 1941, to March 1, 1942, I waited, and while I waited I found much work to do. Through messengers who had ways and means of smuggling letters, I was able to contact my captive friends. I found out how they were treated, what their needs were, and helped to pass letters from them to the outside world by means of a guerrilla postman.

I wrote one letter to the American ambassador giving him the names of the missionaries and their children from our field as well as of those in neighboring fields, where they were being kept and their condition. This letter was cabled to America and published in the church papers. The ambassador also asked the mission headquarters to cable funds. Because the captives were not allowed to send or receive letters, I wrote to their relatives for them. From December 11 to February 27 I wrote 104 letters and kept copies of all of them.

Most of our letters with money drafts from the homeland had been withheld from us by the Japanese three to four months prior to the imprisonment, and the money we had in the bank was frozen. The little cash we had on hand was rapidly disappearing. The Japanese did not feed the captives until they were put into concentration camps, so I made known our needs. Outstation churches, friends and Guerrillas collected or donated money in the amount of \$650 in Chinese currency—\$36 American money—for our use.

On March 1, at midnight, news came that a number of Japanese trucks and some tanks were on their way to the guerrilla camp where I was hiding. Quickly I arose, packed my few belongings, buried what I could not take with me, hired two cartpullers, and began my flight once again.

A Christian home about five miles away hid me during the next week. One day as I peered out of the little home, I saw Chinese villagers fleeing north, families with children pressing forward, old people tottering along, a few possessions tied to their backs. I looked in the opposite direction and I saw people streaming toward the south, also looking bewildered and confused. Villages on both sides of me, one-half to two miles distant, were being attacked by the Japanese, yet God had mercifully provided a place of refuge between for me.

Danger, however, always remained as close as the next person. One day I overheard some Chinese guerrillas hiding in the same yard whispering together whether they should surrender. My heart beat faster. If they gave themselves up to the Japanese, they might reveal my hiding place to receive amnesty for themselves. I knew I had to move again.

But where should I go? Every place seemed as uncertain as the next. Finally I moved nearer the city of Tsaohsien, less than three miles from where the Bartels were imprisoned. Here the Christians of the area soon learned of my plight and came in large numbers to encourage me.

Yet I prayed, *Lord, show me where to go next*, for even this could only be a temporary refuge. Should I make a dash into Free China? The thought continued to bore into my consciousness. If I went, what about my captive friends? I wrote them that I might have to make a dash for freedom if I wanted to save my life. Loyal replied that the Japanese had made him personally responsible to deliver me up to them. I knew now that after having dodged the Japanese for over three months, death awaited me if they captured me. Yet I did not want Loyal to die in my place.

His next message asked me to postpone my departure into Free China for a few days to see how things would turn out. One night, unable to sleep, I pleaded with the Lord to show me the way. Death for me or death for Loyal—surely there was another way. As I prayed, the Spirit of the Lord called to mind the phrase from Isaiah 52:11, 12: “God is your reward,” which in my Chinese Bible reads, “Depart ye . . . for the Lord will go before you; and the God of Israel shall be your rearguard.” The Chinese translation for “rearguard” is “shield for the back.” I could not expect a clearer answer to my prayers nor more definite leading. I was ready to go.

However, I waited another week to see how matters would develop. During that week, Loyal, who was a Chinese citizen, was advised by the Japanese Consul that he and his family and brother Jonathan would be permitted to leave prison soon and return to their home on the mission compound. Three weeks later they were granted this privilege. They sent me a note saying I could leave for Free China. On March 26, 1942, I started on my trip to freedom, the only white woman in that part of China to try to escape the Japanese occupation forces. I packed my cot, bedding and necessary clothing on a two-wheeled cart and crawled on top. The cartpuller was one of the boys who had grown up in the orphanage on the mission compound, so I could trust him. We avoided the roads and places where we might meet Japanese or traitor soldiers. I wore Chinese clothes and tucked a handkerchief under my cap to shade my eyes and hide my face. Usually my cartpuller and some Christians went ahead to find the best road and a came back for me.

At one point we had to cross two rivers. We could not cross over the bridge, for that was heavily guarded day and night, and the Chinese were forbidden to use their boats to ferry people across. We faced an almost insurmountable problem until we found the son-in-law of one of the church members who owned a boat and was willing to transport me

across.

That evening we travelled part of the way to the river after dark so the guards would not notice us. We slept a few hours in the home of the son-in-law, then about four o'clock the next morning we crossed the stream safely by moonlight. As we crossed, some guards not far away called out asking who was going across. Our boatman told them we were some people going across to a marketplace. Our two escorts walked with us through ten miles of enemy territory after we left the boat, leaving us only after we got to the marketplace near another guerrilla camp.

My flight to save my life took us across the Yellow River, which was flooded about seven miles wide where we crossed. After I knew that stretch of water lay between me and the Japanese, I felt relieved for I knew their trucks and tanks could not cross it. I took the handkerchief from my face, for now I knew I could safely look at the world again. Now I could let my voice ring out in songs of praise, for I was in Free China.

Had we traveled on main roads and across the bridge, we could have made the distance in three and one-half days. As fugitives, it took us eighteen. I was repeatedly forced to hide while my cartpuller found a way to keep going. Sixteen out of eighteen nights had been spent in churches or in the homes of Christians. Fourteen times I was able to preach the Gospel to the people with whom I stayed. A flight to freedom or a preaching tour? Which was it?

8

EXTENDED FLIGHT

I had come to a place of rest, but I found no rest, for once again the Japanese slowly crept up behind me like a giant steam roller crushing all before its mighty path. However, while I was still free I worked at whatever I was able to do. A few days after my arrival in Honan province, I helped in the village work of the China Inland Mission for some time. I also found an opening with the many students who had fled into Free China to get away from the Japanese army draft and who were attending schools that the Chinese National government had set up for them. By visiting among some of these 15,000 refugee students, I was able to contact students from our own mission and encourage them. The students were far from home, and money could not be sent into the occupied area nor from that region into Free China. So I loaned money to them. In turn, they notified their parents to repay this loan to my missionary co-workers who had no way of receiving money from mission headquarters in America.

Early in 1944 rumors increased in intensity and frequency that the Japanese had reached the Yellow River and would soon be headed in our direction. My flight began again. I went to Amhwei to get Lenora, one of the orphan girls who was attending the government school for refugees. With her came another Christian girl of our mission who was willing to go with us to West China to work as a Biblewoman.

By the time we were ready to travel, the word came that the Japanese had crossed the river. Our flight looked hopeless, for we had no means of transportation. Three of the missionaries from a neighboring village pedalled

through Shui Tsai on bicycles. We didn't even have that much. Finally the Chinese co-workers in the church and the village officials stepped in to help us. They arranged for two carts pulled by men and a certificate with an official stamp on it that would bring us safely out of the danger zone.

We had traveled only about twenty miles when Chinese soldiers fleeing before the oncoming Japanese army commandeered our carts. I protested vigorously, but without success, for they forced the cartpullers to go back with them some distance. I renewed my plea and refused to leave the carts, showing them the papers the village officers had given me at Shui Tsai. Finally, they allowed the cartpullers to come back to us.

At Loho, Honan, where there was a bus depot and railway station, I had hoped to find a faster means of transportation, but trains going west were overcrowded with fleeing military personnel. Some missionaries who attempted to go west by truck were set off on the road while soldiers commandeered their trucks.

So we clung to our carts, slowly moving westward. Day followed day. Our journey to West China, which I had thought would take a short four or five days, multiplied into weeks of gruelling hardship. At one point a Japanese bomber dropped a bomb on a village less than one-fourth of a mile away from where we were edging our way forward. At another point the Chinese had dug ditches or trenches through the highway every hundred feet making it necessary to lift the carts over them. Flat tires were regular occurrences.

One day we traveled on an ox-cart road which had deep ruts in it filled with dust and loose sand. Our cart, with its bad tires weakened from long use in bad conditions, threatened to break down under its load. I had to make a crucial decision. Should I abandon my things and try to escape only with my life? The little money I had was losing its value every day. My goods were worth more, for they had gone up in price. So I prayed and supported the wheels

of the cart as best I could over the rough spots.

We had hoped for bus service at a city in southwestern Honan, but instead we had to settle for a truck which was willing to take us and our meagre belongings. We had traveled only a short distance when Japanese bombers roared overhead, dropping their explosives on a neighboring airfield. The truck jerked to a stop and everyone crawled into a hiding place. When the girls and I returned after the immediate scare was over, the truck was already moving into the distance. Our baggage had been piled beside the road. We had been traveling black market and they no longer wanted our company.

Other means of transportation to the West seemed more and more impossible to find as nearly every day the Japanese airforce flew over and dropped bombs on the air base and the city. The military requisitioned all buses; civilians had to wait for a travel opportunity later on—which never seemed to come.

Because buses and trucks were out of the question, we next tried to hire a boat to take us upriver to Ankangso. Two weeks elapsed before we finally got onto a boat so crowded with baggage and people that I slept on top of my steamer trunk for several nights.

At our next stop, we looked for bus or truck transportation again but found nothing, so we returned to travel on the river. By now we had traveled about three hundred miles upriver from Lao Ho Kou to Ankang, Szechuan. Because it was dark when we arrived and almost impossible to find a mission station at a strange place at that time of the night, we spent the night on the boat. The next morning we found some Norwegian missionaries who took us in. Soon after breakfast they arranged for a Red Cross truck that was leaving in thirty minutes to take us along. This was the best travel connection we were able to make during the whole trip to West China.

As we tried to find comfortable spots on top of the high load in the back of the truck, I noticed that we were sitting

on two big iron objects. We asked the driver what they were. "Two large bombs being taken to another American base," he replied. The truck had carried Red Cross supplies in the past, but was now transporting ammunition. And we had been so grateful to get this ride; all day long we kept close company with these bombs!

The next morning, after a brief night's rest, we climbed onto our high bomb perch again and were off to Hancheng. The road meandered through mountainous areas. More than thirty different kinds of trees from evergreen to tung oil covered the mountainsides. Wherever trees were sparse, there were wide splashes of green grass and wild flowers. Near the villages, fields of vegetables, fruit, and grain reached up the steep hillsides in small terraced plots. Silvery streams threaded their way down the mountain. The narrow steep road spiralled 'round and 'round in hairpin curves. As we bounced along on the backs of the bombs, the beauty around us lifted our spirits and we praised God for his marvellous creation.

After reaching Hancheng, Shensi, safely, we planned to go on to Kuang Yuan, Szechuan, but again no bus or truck was available for the next few days. Rain set in. The unpaved, ungraveled mountain roads were dangerous when wet and slippery. Besides, by now nearly all cars had tires with the tread worn smooth from overuse. We waited for about a week, always alert for some type of transportation to take us farther westward.

The next lap of our journey was made finally by bus, followed by a further lap by boat. We were now only about sixty miles from Pei Shui Kai, Szechuan, where the H. C. Bartels had opened a new station in a new field. Once while traveling by bus, our baggage arrived later on by truck and had been soaked in the rain. On the boat once again our trunks stood in water, making it necessary for us to unpack and dry everything in them before we could go on. I dried my German Bible and my Chinese-English dictionary by turning over a page at a time.

Finally we boarded a better boat, expecting to arrive at the Bartels in a short time. Instead the journey continued—long, tedious and dangerous. At several places, where we had to cross rapids, one of the boatmen would stay on the boat to guide it while the other men with cables of braided bamboo pulled the boat over the churning water, sometimes crawling along the riverside to keep the craft from rushing into the rocks. Several times the cables broke and the boat spun downstream, threatening to crash against the rocks. But always we were saved from this disaster.

What we thought would be a short sixty miles took two weeks to travel. After eighty-three days of flight we arrived at our final destination, the home of Rev. and Mrs. H. C. Bartel, who had by a strange turn of circumstances been led to Free China earlier. During the Japanese occupation of China, the Bartels had felt led to visit their son, Paul, in Free China and to preach the Gospel to the people there. They had left in October, 1942, so when war broke out between the United States and Japan they were out of danger. Around Pei Shei Kai they had received a field from the China Inland Mission and the Christian Missionary Alliance. God had provided in bringing them there ahead of me.

9

WITH THE BARTELS

The pioneer missionary on a foreign land enters Satan's uncontested grounds. There he wrestles not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of darkness in this world, and against spiritual wickedness in high places. We met demon-possessed people such as those mentioned in the New Testament. At times the power of the forces opposing us moved so high in our awareness, a feeling of depression overcame us.

In a pioneer field trampled hard by Satan's forces, the health of the missionary is particularly vulnerable to his attacks. This was true of the area now occupied by the Bartels. All alone, far from a doctor or other medical care, the missionary is dependent upon God for healing. Here at Pei Shui Kai, H. C. Bartel suffered from a foot condition which made walking almost impossible; Mrs. Bartel was ill with a weak heart and chronic dysentery. Our household could not afford to hire servants, so we had to carry water from village wells uphill quite a distance.

Once Mr. Bartel became so exhausted while carrying water, he thought he could not make it back to the house. While he rested by the roadside, he spoke to the Lord, "Dear Lord, I have only this one pair of feet. If I cannot use them, I cannot run errands for You anymore. I cannot carry your precious Word to these needy people. I pray You to heal these feet for I have no others." The Lord heard his prayer. He got up and carried the water home, and from then on his feet were healed. He made many mountain tours on foot after that. Mrs. Bartel's health also improved to the

extent that she had strength and courage to continue the work.

The people in this part of China were some of the most degraded we had seen. About ninety percent, young and old, were opium addicts. Mothers who used the drug themselves blew the smoke into the faces of their infants to put them to sleep. Soon the babies craved the drug. People starved themselves to use the money to buy opium. Their minds were dull and their hearts deceitful. Some reached a state where they could not live and they could not die. They simply existed.

The house in which we lived stood on a mountainside. When it rained the water rushed downhill and found its way into the house through the many ratholes. The roof leaked so much that it rained inside almost as much as outside. Though Mr. Bartel tried to get workmen to help him repair the house, they were not trustworthy and demanded excessive wages.

On market days, people from many villages in the area came to buy and sell their products. On such days the mile-long street was thronged with people. Because one of the rooms of our house faced the street, Mr. Bartel changed it into a street chapel. Many Chinese came to see the posters on the walls and to hear the Gospel for the first time.

Our marketing was carried out very frugally. One of the Chinese brethren helped me to buy the wood we used for fuel, which was carried in bundles of sticks about four feet long over the mountain to market. Before we could use it in our primitive oven of mud, cobblestone, and a few bricks, we had to chop it up. While baking bread, I stood before the fire fanning the charcoal and adding fuel from time to time until the bread was done. Food had to be stored in rat-proof containers. Laundry on the line had to be watched constantly so thieves would not run away with it. We sweetened our food with honey or with saccharin sent to us in air mail letters from the United States. Our lamps consisted of a shallow dish with a homemade wick of cotton fed with peanut or walnut oil. This thin wick gave only a

tiny light. My clock was stolen before I evacuated to Free China and the hairspring of my watch was broken and could not be repaired during the war, so we ate when we were hungry.

In early March of 1945, three years after I first arrived in Free China, all foreign women and children in the area were again asked by their respective consular officers to leave their work, for that dread juggernaut, the Japanese army, was threatening to move west to conquer Sian and Pao Chi to the north of us and Chengtu and Chungking south of us. Thus the place where we were living was no longer safe. Apparently my journeys in China were not yet finished.

The Bartels were getting along in years and in poor health, so they decided to stay in China. I could not leave them alone; furthermore, my Chinese orphan, Lenora, was with me. She also had no place to go. To return home was just as difficult, for it meant possibly a long nine-month trip over the Himalaya mountains, through India, and then a ship voyage around the point of Africa to South America, and finally to the United States.

The Bartels moved to Chiang Loeh Chen in Honan to open an outpost for our mission there and Lenora and I made our home in Kuang Yuan in some vacated missionary residences. In this central traffic center I could handle the financial transactions for the mission during a time of rapid inflation and great problems in getting money exchanged. Theoretically we were millionaires, yet we had to be very careful to make ends meet. A draft for \$400.00 from the homeland was exchanged into more than one million dollars in Chinese currency. However, when I went to market, I bought six pounds of fat meat for \$1,560, one chicken for \$620, a bag of flour for \$4,000, and vegetables for \$260. With such prices our food soon tasted like money.

By now over eleven years had passed since my last furlough, so I was beginning to think of returning to America. But before I went I wanted to visit this new field in West China in its entirety so I could give a better report to the Board of Foreign Missions and the home churches.

My plan was to travel around the east side of the field, and then cross it from north to south, a distance of about four hundred miles.

For sixty days I traveled over roads that led through high and rough mountains, to little pockets of people hidden on their slopes or in villages in the valleys. For transportation I used truck, boat, mule and my own feet. I walked more than one-fourth of the distance. I had many opportunities to preach the Gospel to individuals and to crowds. The Lord showed me many open doors and the hunger for the Gospel which these people had. I was convinced of the necessity of taking possession of this field for God. Maybe after my furlough a number of missionaries could return with me to bring the message of salvation to the neglected people hidden in the thousands of valleys in these mountains.

One evening in August of 1945 the Bible woman rushed in to tell me the joyous news that the Japanese had made peace with the Chinese. The Chinese Nationalist government had announced that the Japanese had surrendered. At once Kuang Yuan erupted with excitement. The greater part of the city's population thronged the streets. Torches were lit and swung in the air. The Chinese greeted us Americans warmly. The next few days were spent in feasting and drinking, for the eight long years of war had finally ended.

10

REVISITING THE FIELDS

Before I returned to America I had a longing to see Luella and Esther, our other orphan girls. Esther was in Honan and could be visited on my way to the coast. Luella in Yunnan was about eight hundred to a thousand miles to the southwest. Lenora, the third orphan, had just married a fine Christian young man and was now provided for, so I was free to go. The Lord provided the plane fare to Yunnan, where I was finally able to get rid of my chronic dysentery.

When I returned to Kuang Yuan, I found that Miss Mary Schmidt had arrived from Shanghai to take care of her sister, Mrs. Bartel. Mary, who had spent two and a half years in a Japanese prison camp, had lost her faculty of speech as a result of her prolonged internment. She could say only two or three words of a sentence. Otherwise her strength had returned so that she was able to take care of her sister who was suffering from a weak heart. My last responsibility was to bring the mission's financial accounts up-to-date, and then I was ready for my long awaited furlough.

On the return journey to the coast, I visited a number of missions and groups of stations. Travel was hazardous and indefinite, for the railroad's rolling stock was worn out after eight years of war, and roads and tracks were in a sad state of repair.

As I traveled, I watched my many fellow travelers with interest. Many Chinese who had fled to the West because of the Japanese invasion were going back to their home

villages, rich and poor alike, in cars, trucks, ox carts, rickshaws, and wheelbarrows. Some of the poorest walked the entire distance. The war with the Japanese was over and they wanted to be home, unaware that in less than a year many would suffer again at the hands of the communists, nor that by 1949 the communists would be in control, having been able to defeat the National Republican party weakened by Japanese invasion.

At one point in my trip to the coast, Mennonite Central Committee, a relief agency, wanted to send some relief funds to native workers of the China Inland Mission for distribution among flood and famine victims, so they made a package of about twenty thousand \$1000 dollar bills, wrapped it in a piece of cloth to make it look like a common piece of baggage, and asked me to be responsible for its delivery. Sometimes the package served as a seat for my fellow passengers, sometimes it lay with my baggage. The money, amounting to about \$10,000 in United States currency, was safely delivered after a train and truck ride. In the flood zone, I met Esther again after a five-year separation. She was now a nurse, had married a Christian and was working in a clinic opened for flood victims.

Another stop was made in what used to be the battle zone between the Japanese and the Chinese. When I made my dash to Free China, I had to bypass the towns and hide in small villages. Now that the war was over I spent a night in the county seat where a number of Lutheran Christians met. How they welcomed me into their midst in spite of the fact that we had not met each other before. Somehow they had heard that a missionary lady was risking her life to get into Free China not far from them. They had gathered in secret prayer meetings to pray for my safety. Now I could tell what the Lord had done for me.

Back in Tsaohsien in North China where I had worked earlier, I met some missionary co-workers. Some had spent many months in concentration camps or as semi-prisoners under the control of the Japanese. Many had suffered much because financial aid could not be sent from the homeland.

Yet the situation was now tense again for another reason. The communists were already in control in this area and the people lived in daily fear of them.

It was also my privilege on this return trip to the coast before going to America to visit the mission field of the Mennonite Brethren in Fukien where I had worked for seven years, first as a teacher of missionary children. My plan after I reached Shanghang in South China was to visit all the outstations to get an insight into the work the natives had carried on alone for the last five years after the missionaries left. But the time I had planned to spend here was shortened by a lengthy siege of malaria, which endangered my life. However, the Christians prayed and fasted steadily for my recovery and two days after the crisis had passed, with the support of two women, I delivered a short 20-minute message at the church.

My plan to visit all the outstations had been given up, for my ankles were so badly swollen as an after-effect of my sickness, it would have been impossible to walk over the mountain roads to the villages. I made some arrangements for the continuance of the work and tried to comfort the Christians by saying that if I left and reported on the work in the homeland, some missionaries would be sent out to them.

I knew I had to return home. Though it was hard for me to leave the Christians in Shanghang, and they found it difficult to understand why I had to go, my weakened physical condition and my longing to see my aging parents, as well as my desire to tell the Christians in America what God had done in China during the past twelve years, grew stronger each day.

Earlier, before arriving at Shanghang, I had applied to a steamship company to reserve passage for the United States, but the company notified me that all passages had been taken and the next ship would not be available for a month or more. I did not want to wait for a month, so I prayed almost day and night that God would provide a way

out. He did. Within days a call came saying there was room for me on an army transport, which was carrying mostly Chinese and Filipinos.

During my twelve years in North and West China, I had worn Chinese-style clothing, for I found that the people paid more attention to my American clothing than to the message of the Gospel. To get closer to them I had set aside foreign clothes; now I found that my American clothing that had not been stolen from me was too old, so I picked out some relief clothing for myself from the shipment the Mennonite Central Committee had just received. A green overcoat with a grey fur collar, two dresses and sweater had to do to cross the ocean.

After one stop at Manila, our boat docked in San Francisco one beautiful evening in October just as the sun was setting. Day was done, a ship had come home to harbour. Little did I know then that my day's work in China was done also.

EPILOGUE

The Board of Foreign Missions had planned that Paulina Foote would return to China after her deputation work was completed. Before she was through traveling in the United States, some of the missionaries were already returning from China because of the communist menace. So the board deemed it inadvisable to send her back then.

She was disappointed, for she longed to go back to the many Chinese who were anxious to hear more about the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Her orphan girls were also waiting for her return. Together with her, they had hoped to be able to serve the Lord in the same field someday. Christians in the different fields where she had worked in South China, in Shantung and Honan and the West China field were hoping she would return.

But the door to China was suddenly shut. Perhaps never again in China would the opportunities to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ be as unrestricted as they had been between the years 1935 to 1950. Although the Japanese had hindered the work for a time, when the missionaries returned to the fields after their surrender they found as many as a thousand or more candidates waiting for baptism and a large number who had already been baptized by the native pastors. But now the entire work was left in the hands of the national Christians, for the overseas missionary was no longer welcome.

The communists proclaimed religious liberty, but they considered Christianity a foreign religion which exploited people. Because of this, in many cases mission property,

churches, schools and hospitals were taken from the Christians. Not a few who identified with the church were sent away into forced labor camps; some were stripped of all their possessions; others were thrown into prison; some were shot to death; a number were tortured and even buried alive.

Yet in faith Christians continue to believe God's living Word and the Holy Spirit are at work, even now. The Lord alone knows and time will tell what has happened in China.

Following her return from China, Paulina Foote spent considerable time traveling from church to church telling the American Christians how God had been able to use her, a dry stick, in the work of building His kingdom. In the spring of 1950, she noticed the first signs of arthritis in her body. In spite of medical treatment, her condition worsened so that she had to resort to using a cane. Finally, in the fall of 1952, she was restricted to a wheel chair. Her spiritual struggle to accept this handicap continued for some time. How could she expect God to live in a temple broken down with arthritis? Yet if He chose to live in it, should she not be satisfied? She accepted patiently the "thorn in the flesh" He had permitted to remain in her. For years she resided at the Corn Home for Aged in Corn, Oklahoma. Paulina Foote, servant of the Lord, went to her eternal rest on January 8, 1968.

